What *Is* Baptism?

By R.C. Sproul

The Roman Catholic Church sees the sacrament of baptism as the instrumental cause of justification.

p. 3罗马天主教会将洗礼视为成义的工具性原因。

As Protestants, we say that justification is by faith alone. That little word *by* is critical to our understanding of how justification takes place

p.5作为新教徒，我们认为成义仅凭信心。这个小词“凭”对我们理解成义的过程至关重要

The Roman Catholic Church says the instrumental cause of justification is baptism. Rome proclaims that a person is justified when he or she is baptised by a priest. At baptism, the person receives an infusion, an inpouring, of grace in the soul

p. 5罗马天主教会认为，成义的工具性原因是洗礼。罗马宣称，当一个人接受牧师的洗礼时，他或她就被成义。在洗礼时，个人的灵魂中会注入恩典

the Reformers argued that the benefits signified by baptism are not received apart from faith.

P7. 宗教改革者辩称，洗礼所象征的益处并不是与信心分开的。

We do it first because Christ commanded it, but also because it conveys the sign of the promise of God of salvation by faith and all of the benefits that flow from that. When a person is baptised and comes to faith, if he later worries about the loss of his salvation, he can recall his baptism—not because the baptism guarantees his salvation, but because it reminds him of the unfailing promise of God to preserve all those who are engrafted into Christ.

P7. 我们首先这样做是因为基督命令我们这么做，同时因为洗礼传达了上帝通过信心赐予救恩的应许以及由此带来的所有益处。当一个人受洗并信仰后，如果他后来担心失去救恩，他可以回想起自己的洗礼——这不是因为洗礼保证了他的救恩，而是因为它提醒他，上帝对所有归入基督之人的永恒应许。

God does not promise any of the benefits of salvation to unbelievers. The promise is only to those who believe, and the promise is absolutely sure for them. Therefore, baptism is infinitely valuable.

Baptism, then, is not necessary for salvation. We have only to consider the example of the thief on the cross; he was not baptised, yet Jesus promised that he would be in paradise that day.

p. 7上帝并不向不信者应许任何救恩的益处。这个应许仅针对那些信仰的人，并且对他们来说是绝对可靠的。因此，洗礼是无比珍贵的。

所以，洗礼并不是救恩所必需的。我们只需考虑十字架上的强盗的例子；他并没有受洗，但耶稣承诺那天他会在乐园里。

At the end of Matthew’s gospel, we find a climactic communication between Jesus and His disciples.

p.13在马太福音的结尾，我们发现耶稣与他的门徒之间进行了一次重要的交流。

马太福音 28:16–20

In all of His teaching until the time of His crucifixion, Jesus never commanded baptism. But He did so here. Having risen from the grave, He had the authority, because of His finished work, to create a new sign for the new covenant, and He did just that in commanding baptism.

p. 13 在他被钉十字架之前的所有教导中，耶稣从未命令过洗礼。但在这里，他却这样做了。复活后，基于他完成的工作，他拥有了权柄，能够为新约设立一个新的标志，而他确实如此，通过命令洗礼来实现这一点。

In the previous chapter, I asserted that baptism is not necessary for salvation. However, if you were to ask me, “Is baptism necessary for the Christian?” I would say, “Absolutely.” It is not necessary for salvation, but it is necessary for obedience, because Christ, with no ambiguity, commanded that all of those who belong to Him, who are part of the new

covenant family, and who receive the benefits of His salvation are to be baptised in the Trinitarian formula.

p. 14在上一章中，我断言洗礼对救恩不是必需的。然而，如果你问我："洗礼对基督徒来说必要吗？"我会回答："绝对必要。"洗礼不是救恩所必需的，但对顺服来说是必要的，因为祂毫不含糊地命令所有属于祂、成为新约家庭一部分并接受祂救恩益处的人，都要以三位一体的名义受洗。

When God enters into covenants with His people, making promises of redemption to them, His pattern is to attest to the authenticity of the covenant by giving some kind of external sign. For instance, when He promised Noah that He would never destroy the world again through a flood, God set His bow in the sky. That bow was a visible sign that confirmed the promise of God for the future of this planet. He was saying that every time we see a rainbow, we should be reminded that God has promised never to destroy the world again with a flood.

p. 17当神与祂的子民立约，并向他们许下救赎的承诺时，祂的模式是通过某种外在的标志来证明这个约的真实性。例如，当祂向挪亚许诺不再通过洪水毁灭世界时，神在天空中设立了祂的彩虹。那道彩虹是一个可见的标志，确认了神对这个星球未来的承诺。祂在说，每当我们看到彩虹时，我们应该被提醒，神已经承诺不再用洪水毁灭世界。

In a similar manner, after instituting His covenant with Abraham, God gave Abraham and his descendants a sign of their membership in the covenant: circumcision. This sign had a dual significance. On the one hand, the cutting of the foreskin was a sign that God was saying, "I am cutting you out from the

rest of fallen humanity and consecrating you as a nation to Myself.” At the same time, the sign was a testimony by the people, saying, as it were, “O God, if I fail to keep the terms of this covenant, if I fail to be faithful to You in this covenant relationship, may I be cut off from all of the benefits of Your covenant promises.” So circumcision symbolised both the blessings and the curses of God’s covenant with Abraham.

p. 17以类似的方式，在与亚伯拉罕立约后，神给了亚伯拉罕和他的后裔一个标志，表明他们是这个约的成员：割礼。这个标志具有双重意义。一方面，割去包皮是一个标志，表明神在说：“我把你从堕落的人类中分离出来，并将你分别为圣，成为我的国。”同时，这个标志也是百姓的见证，意味着：“哦，神，如果我未能遵守这个约的条款，如果我在这个约的关系中未能对您忠诚愿我被剥夺您应许的所有益处。”因此，割礼象征着神与亚伯拉罕立约的祝福与咒诅。

The rite of circumcision was given for all generations of Israelites as the sign of the old covenant

p. 17割礼仪式作为旧约的标志，被赐予所有世代的以色人。

Just as circumcision was the sign of the old covenant, baptism is the sign of the new covenant.

p. 17正如割礼是旧约的标志，洗礼就是新约的标志。

(Colossians 2:9–15)
因为上帝的属性之一切的完全都有形有体地住在基督里。
你们在基督里也是完全的，他是一切执政者和掌权者的元首。
你们在基督里也受了割礼，凭着不是人手所行的割礼，而是靠着基督的割礼，靠着脱去肉体的罪的身体，
在洗礼中与他一同埋葬，也在洗礼中与他一同复活，都是藉着那使他从死里复活的上帝所运行的信心。
你们原是死在自己的过犯和未受割礼的肉体中，但上帝使你们与基督一同活过来，赦免了你们的一切过犯，
抹去了那按各种规条控告我们、反对我们的罪债记录，把它从我们中间除去，钉在十字架上。
他解除了执政者和掌权者的武装，将他们公开示众，就凭着十字架向他们夸胜。
(歌罗西书 2:9-15)

Paul here tells a body of Gentile believers who have received New Testament baptism that those who are believers have received an internal circumcision. They have a circumcision of the heart, so it is proper and appropriate for them to have the sign of the new covenant, which points beyond itself to all of the benefits of Christ.

P. 18保罗在这里告诉一群已经接受新约洗礼的外邦信徒，信徒们已经接受了内心的割礼。他们拥有的是心灵的割礼，因此他们拥有新约的标志是合适的，这个标志指向基督所带来的所有益处。

Of course, circumcision and baptism are not identical, just as the old covenant and the new covenant are not identical

P. 18当然，割礼和洗礼并不相同，就如旧约和新约也不相同。

There is an element of discontinuity, which is why we talk about the old and the new

P18. 确实存在不连续的元素，这就是我们谈论旧约和新约的原因

However, the new covenant is not in a state of total discontinuity from the old.

P18. 然而，新约与旧约之间并不是完全不连续的状态。

Both circumcision and baptism signify God’s promises. And in both cases, it is God who institutes the sign.

p. 18割礼和洗礼都象征着上帝的承诺。在这两种情况下，设立这一标志的都是上帝。

The integrity of the sign rests upon the person whose promise it is. God’s promises stand behind the sign.

P19. 这个标志的完整性依赖于作出承诺的那位人士。上帝的承诺支撑着这个标志。

John’s preparatory baptism was a sign of cleansing from sin

P20. 约翰的预备洗礼是洗净罪恶的标志。

New Testament baptism signifies much more than John’s baptism indicated. In a sense, because baptism is the sign of the new covenant, it signifies *all* of the benefits that God gives to His people under that covenant, all of the fruits we gain when we embrace the gospel of salvation through Christ alone.

P20. 新约的洗礼所象征的远超过约翰的洗礼。在某种意义上，由于洗礼是新约的标志，它象征着上帝在这一约定下给予祂子民的所有恩惠，以及当我们单靠基督拥抱救恩福音时所获得的所有果实。

One historic Protestant and Reformed doctrinal statement, the Westminster Confession of Faith, defines baptism this way: “Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptised into the visible church, but also to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his engrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, of his giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life: which sacrament is, by Christ’s own appointment, to be continued in his church until the end of the world” (28.1).

P20. 一个历史悠久的 Protestant 和改革宗教义声明，威斯敏斯特信仰告白这样定义洗礼：

“洗礼是耶稣基督所设立的，新约时期的圣礼[1]，不但为了严肃承认受洗者加入有形教会[2]，对受洗者也是恩典之约的记号与印证[3]，象征连结于基督[4]、重生[5]、并罪得赦免[6]，借耶稣基督将祂自己奉献给神，行事为人有新生的样式[7]；这圣礼是基督亲自吩咐的，

必须在教会中继续施行，直到世界的末了
”[8]。(28.1)

Engrafting into Christ

“与基督嫁接”

Engrafting into Christ.” The term *engrafting* is borrowed from agriculture. Paul uses it when he speaks of the relationship between Gentile believers and Jewish believers, and he describes Gentile believers as wild olive branches that have been grafted into the olive tree, which is the covenant people of God (Rom. 11:17–24). So engrafting portrays something being attached to a host that is alive and growing, in order to draw life from it. Thus, when the confession speaks of engrafting into Christ, it is using one of the most vivid biblical metaphors for what it means to become a Christian.

P20. “与基督嫁接”这个术语源于农业。保罗在谈到外邦信徒与犹太信徒之间的关系时使用了这个词，形容外邦信徒为被嫁接到橄榄树上的野橄榄枝，而这棵橄榄树则代表上帝的约定子民（罗马书11:17－24）。因此，嫁接描绘的是某物附着于一个活的、成长中的宿主，以便从中汲取生命。因此，当信仰告白提到与基督嫁接时，它使用了一个生动的圣经隐喻，说明成为基督徒的意义。

the New Testament teaches us that, in our natural state, we are estranged from God. That means we are outside of fellowship

with God, outside of Christ, not in a living communion or fellowship with Him

p21.新约教导我们，在我们自然的状态下，我们与上帝是隔绝的。这意味着我们处于与上帝、与基督隔离的状态，并未与祂保持活生生的交往或亲密的关系。

Believe **in** the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31), the Greek word translated as "in" is *eis*. Thus, Paul and Silas were really saying, "Believe *into* Christ."

P21 "你当信主耶稣基督，你就必得救，"（使徒行传 16:31）中，翻译为"在"的希腊词是"eis"。因此，保罗和西拉实际上是在说："信入基督。"

Let me hasten to add emphatically that I am not saying that everyone who is baptised is therefore in Christ. I am simply saying that baptism signifies life in Christ. It signifies God's promise to His people of a relationship with Him through His Son by faith. It is the sign of being in Christ rather than in the kingdom of darkness. Like the Old Testament sign of circumcision, baptism is a sign that people are in a special relationship with God, the covenant Lord of His redeemed flock.

P.21-22让我强调，我并不是说每个受洗的人都因此就在基督里。我只是想说，洗礼象征着在基督里的生命。它象征着上帝通过祂的儿子向祂的子民所应许的信仰关系。这是一个表明人们在基督里，而不

是在黑暗王国中的标志。与旧约的割礼标志类似，洗礼是一个标志，表明人们与上帝——祂所赎回的羊群的约定主——之间有特殊的关系。

Regeneration of the Heart

心的重生

In classical Reformed theology, the terms *regeneration* or *rebirth* have been used with reference to the supernatural work by which God the Holy Spirit brings to spiritual life a soul that is dead in sin (Eph. 2). Prior to regeneration, we have no inclination for the things of God; we have no desire for Him; we do not want Him in our thinking. But when the Holy Spirit operates on our souls, we cease to be hostile to the things of God and begin to love Christ; we run to Him and embrace Him because we have been made alive to the things of God. This is the new birth that Jesus describes in John 3

P22. 在经典的改革宗神学中，重生或再生的术语用于指代圣灵通过超自然的工作使一个因罪而死的灵魂复活（以弗所书 2）。在重生之前，我们对上帝的事物没有任何倾向；我们对祂没有渴望；在我们的思维中不想要祂。但是，当圣灵在我们的灵魂中运作时，我们不再敌视上帝的事物，开始爱基督；我们奔向祂，拥抱祂，因为我们对上帝的事物重新获得了生命。这就是耶稣在约翰福音 3 中所描述的新生。

We are not sinners because we sin; we sin because we are sinners. The corrupt fruit flows out of our corrupt natures. When we sin, we are doing what comes naturally to us as fallen creatures.

P23. 我们不是因为犯罪才成为罪人；我们之所以犯罪，是因为我们本身就是罪人。腐败的果实源于我们腐败的本性。当我们犯罪时，我们是在作为堕落生物自然地做出反应。

What does this teaching mean for baptism? Baptism is a sign of God’s promise to regenerate His people, to liberate them from the moral bondage of original sin, to cleanse their souls from guilt and purify them so they can enter into a saving relationship with Him. So all of what happens in the Holy Spirit’s work of changing us from the inside out is signified by the sacrament of baptism. That’s why the use of water is at the heart of baptism.

P23. 这教义对洗礼意味着什么？洗礼是上帝应许重生祂子民的标志，旨在解放他们脱离原罪的道德束缚，洗净他们灵魂中的罪愆，使他们得以进入与祂的救赎关系。因此，圣灵在我们内心深处所进行的所有改变都通过洗礼这一圣礼得以象征。这就是为什么水的使用是洗礼的核心。

Remission and Surrender

赦免与屈服

When God justifies us, He declares us just by the remission of sins. Our justification is rooted and grounded in the ministry of Christ, who took our sins upon Himself and satisfied the demands of God's justice through His atoning work. On the one hand, Jesus 'death on the cross satisfied the justice of the Father.

p. 24当上帝使我们称义时，祂通过赦免罪孽宣告我们为义。我们的称义根植于基督的事工，祂将我们的罪担在自己身上，通过祂的赎罪工作满足了上帝公义的要求。一方面，耶稣在十字架上的死亡满足了父神的公义。

So when baptism is administered, the promise of God to remit our sins and to remove them from us as far as the east is from the west (Ps. 103:12) is signified.

P24. 因此，当洗礼施行时，上帝赦免我们罪孽的应许，以及将我们的罪远离我们，像东离西那样（诗篇 103:12），得以象征。

giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life.

P24. "通过耶稣基督向上帝奉献，过新生的生活。"

Death and Resurrection

死亡与复活

Baptism indicates our identification with the death of Christ; by it, we confess our faith that His death was for us, that in His atonement He paid the penalty for our sin. He was not raised from the dead simply for His own vindication, but as the New Testament teaches us, He was raised as the firstborn of many brethren (Rom. 8:29). So, the conquest of death, on behalf of all who are in Christ, is also signified by baptism.

P27.洗礼表明我们与基督的死亡认同；通过洗礼，我们宣告信仰，认为祂的死亡是为了我们，在祂的赎罪中，祂为我们的罪付出了代价。祂并不是仅仅为了自己的证明而复活，而是正如新约教导的那样，祂作为许多弟兄中的长子复活了（罗马书8:29）。因此，洗礼也象征着代表所有在基督里之人的死亡征服。

As you can see, baptism is full of rich symbolism that points to all the things God does for us when He delivers us from our sin. The promises of God to His beloved people through Jesus Christ are on brilliant display when the sacrament of baptism is administered. These things were not part of the significance of the preparatory baptism of John the Baptist. New Testament baptism communicates all that Christ Jesus accomplished for us.

P27. 如你所见，洗礼充满了丰富的象征意义，指向上帝在拯救我们脱离罪时为我们所做的一切。当洗礼这一圣礼施行时，上帝通过耶稣基督向祂所爱之子民的应许展现得淋漓尽致。这些并不是约翰洗礼

的预备洗礼所包含的意义。新约的洗礼传达了基督耶稣为我们所成就的一切。

It is important to note that Paul speaks of circumcision as both a sign and a seal (Rom. 4:11), so Protestants historically have used the same language for baptism. The concept of sealing is one of the most neglected teachings of the New Testament. It tells us, for example, that everyone who is in Christ is not only reborn of the Holy Spirit and empowered for ministry, but sealed by the Spirit. Each believer receives the “earnest” of the Spirit. When a person buys a house, he is asked to put down earnest money, which constitutes his promise to pay the balance. Some people default on their promises, showing that they were not really in earnest when they put down their money. But when God makes a down payment and promises to finish the transaction, we need not worry about Him making the full payment. With this language, the New Testament is teaching that everyone who is born again and receives the Holy Spirit has God’s promise that He will do the rest. We are sealed for full salvation.

P27. 值得注意的是，保罗将割礼视为标志和印证（罗马书 4:11），因此，历史上，改革宗也用相同的语言来描述洗礼。印证的概念是新约中最被忽视的教义之一。它告诉我们，例如，所有在基督里的人不仅是被圣灵重生并获得事工的能力，而且是被圣灵印证的。每位信徒都接受了圣灵的“定金”。当一个人购买房屋时，他会被要求支付定金，以此作为他承诺支付余款的保证。有些人未能履行承诺，表明他们在支付定金时并不真心。但当上帝支付定金并承诺完成交易时，我们不必担心祂不会全额支

付。通过这种语言，新约教导我们，所有重生并接受圣灵的人都拥有上帝的应许，祂会完成剩下的工作。我们被印证以获得完全的救赎。

In the ancient world, the seal was the symbol of ownership, of authenticity, and of authority. When a king sent out an edict or an official communication of some kind, the document was sealed with a drop of hot wax, and then the king pressed his signet ring into the wax, giving it his mark or brand to prove its authenticity. In the same way, the gift of the Spirit seals the believer, for God gives His Spirit only to those who are His. The Spirit is God's brand upon the sheep of His flock. Thus, the incredible promise of God of salvation to all who believe is conveyed by the God who never goes back on His word.

P27. 在古代，印证是所有权、真实性和权威的象征。当国王发布法令或任何官方文件时，文件会用一滴热蜡封印，然后国王将自己的印章戒指压入蜡中，留下印记以证明其真实性。同样，圣灵的恩赐也印证信徒，因为上帝只将祂的灵赐予那些属于祂的人。圣灵是上帝在祂羊群上的印记。因此，上帝对所有相信者的救赎应许通过那位从不食言的上帝传达给我们。

sprinkling, pouring, and dipping

洒水、倒水和浸水

In the New Testament, the Greek word that is translated as "baptize" is *baptizo*. This word usually means "to immerse, sink, drown, or go under," and it is for this reason that proponents of immersion argue that theirs is the proper mode for baptism.

p.29在新约中，翻译为“洗礼”的希腊词是“baptizo”。这个词通常意味着“浸入、沉没、淹没或潜入”，因此，浸礼的支持者认为，浸入是洗礼的正确方式。

In some of the New Testament passages where baptizo appears, the context appears to bolster the argument that immersion is the proper mode for baptism. For instance, many conclusions are drawn from John’s baptism because it took place at the Jordan River and indeed John baptised (baptizo) “in the river” (Matt. 3:6). It is assumed that John must have required people to go into the river so that they could be immersed. However, Scripture never says that people were immersed when they went down into the river, merely that they were baptised there. Also, we have ancient Christian art that depicts people being baptised in a river, but they are standing almost waist-deep in the water and the one who is doing the baptizing is scooping up water from the river and pouring it on the heads of the recipients. It appears the recipients went into the water not to be immersed but so that it would be a simple matter to pour water over their heads.

P29-30.在新约的一些段落中，出现“baptizo”这个词的上下文似乎支持浸入是洗礼的正确方式。例如，许多结论是基于约翰的洗礼，因为洗礼发生在约旦河，的确约翰是在“河中”洗礼（马太福音3:6）。人们假设约翰一定要求人们进入河中以便进行浸礼。然而，圣经从未说过人们在下水时被浸，只是说他们在那里接受了洗礼。此外，我们还有古代基督教艺术作品描绘人们在河中受洗的场景，但他们几乎是站在水中，水位达到腰部，而施洗的人

则是从河里舀水，倒在受洗者的头上。这表明，受洗者进入水中并不是为了被浸，而是为了便于将水洒在他们的头上。

Another New Testament narrative that is cited to support immersion is Philip's baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch, recorded in Acts 8. Luke writes that Philip and the eunuch "went down into the water" (Acts 8:38), and there Philip baptised (baptizo) the man. Again, however, the text does not specifically say that the eunuch was immersed. It does say that "they came up out of the water" (v. 39), but clearly this phrase does not mean that both Philip and the eunuch went under the water before coming up again. It simply means that they climbed the bank of the river, just as they had descended it. Here again, the mode of the baptism is not specifically revealed.

P30. 另一个被引用来支持浸礼的新约叙述是腓利对埃提俄比亚太监的洗礼，记载在使徒行传 8 章。路加写道，腓利和太监"下到水中"（使徒行传 8:38），在那里腓利为他施洗（baptizo）。然而，文本并没有具体说明太监是否被浸。确实提到"他们从水中上来"（第 39 节），但显然这句话并不意味着腓利和太监都在水下，之后才再上来。这只是意味着他们沿着河岸爬上去，就像他们下来的时候一样。在这里，洗礼的方式同样没有明确揭示。

The issue becomes more complex when we see that *baptizo* sometimes is used when the context clearly does not suggest immersion. In Mark 7, we are told that the Pharisees noticed some of Jesus 'disciples eating food without first washing their

hands. The washing in view was a ceremonial cleansing that was prescribed not by God's law but by the Jewish rabbinical traditions that had arisen. By way of background, Mark notes that the Pharisees would not eat unless they had washed in this ceremonial way, especially after coming from the marketplace (vv. 3b–4). It is interesting that the word translated as "wash" in verse 4 is *baptizo*, and it clearly does not imply full-body immersion. Likewise, in Luke 11:38, we read of a Pharisee who was astonished that Jesus did not "wash" before dinner. Again, the word *baptizo* is used here, and again it clearly does not mean total immersion in water. Sometimes *baptizo* is used in classical Greek simply to mean "to bathe or wash," and we see examples of that usage in these passages.

P30. 当我们看到"baptizo"这个词有时在上下文中明显不暗示浸入时，问题变得更加复杂。在马可福音 7 章中，我们得知法利赛人注意到耶稣的一些门徒在未先洗手的情况下吃食物。这里所提到的洗净是仪式性的洁净，这不是上帝的律法所规定的，而是由犹太拉比传统所产生的。作为背景，马可指出法利赛人不会吃东西，除非以这种仪式方式洗净，特别是在从市场回来后（第 3b－4 节）。有趣的是，第 4 节中翻译为"洗"的词是"baptizo"，显然并不意味着全身浸入。同样，在路加福音 11:38 中，我们读到一位法利赛人对耶稣未在晚餐前"洗净"感到惊讶。在这里再次使用了"baptizo"，而且显然并不意味着完全浸入水中。有时，baptizo 在古典希腊语中仅仅意味着"洗澡或洗净"，我们在这些段落中可以看到这种用法的例子。

My conclusion is that the question of the mode of baptism should not divide Christians

我的结论是，洗礼方式的问题不应当使基督徒分裂。